

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 1, please add the following new paragraphs before paragraph [0001]:

[0000.2] CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0000.4] This application is a 35 USC 371 application of PCT/DE 03/01799
filed on June 2, 2003.

[0000.6] BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Please replace paragraph [0001] with the following amended paragraph:

[0001] ~~Prior Art~~ **Field of the Invention**

Please replace paragraph [0002] with the following amended paragraph:

[0002] The invention relates to a piezoelectric actuator, for instance for actuating a mechanical component such as a valve or the like[[,]] ~~as defined by the characteristics of the preamble to the main claim.~~

Please add the following new paragraph after paragraph [0002]:

[0002.5] Description of the Prior Art

Please replace paragraph [0004] with the following amended paragraph:

[0004] The construction of ~~this piezoelectric actuator as a so-called multilayer actuator a~~
piezoelectric actuator may, as described for instance in German Patent Disclosure DE 199
28 191 A1, be done in multiple layers; the electrodes by way of which the electrical voltage is
applied are each disposed between the layers. In operation of the piezoelectric actuator, care
must be taken to assure that no interfering cracks form as a result of mechanical stresses in
the layer construction.

Page 2, please replace paragraph [0007] with the following amended paragraph:

[0007] ~~Advantages of the Invention~~

SUMMARY AND ADVANTAGES OF THE INVENTION

Please replace paragraph [0008] with the following amended paragraph:

[0008] The piezoelectric actuator described ~~at the outset~~ **above**, which may be used for instance for actuating a mechanical component, is advantageously ~~constructed with a~~ multilayer construction of piezoelectric layers and inner electrodes between the piezoelectric layers. According to the invention, the individual inner electrodes, already before being assembled into the multilayer construction, are rounded at the corners formed by the cut edges.

Page 3, please replace paragraph [0010] with the following amended paragraph:

[0010] ~~Drawing~~ **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

Please replace paragraph [0011] with the following amended paragraph:

[0011] Exemplary embodiments of the piezoelectric actuator of the invention ~~will be~~ **are** described **herein below**, in conjunction with the ~~drawing. Shown are~~ **drawings, in which:**

Please replace paragraph [0012] with the following amended paragraph:

[0012] Fig. 1 ~~[[,]] a section through~~ **is an isometric view, of with portions broken away, of** a piezoelectric actuator of the prior art, with a multilayer construction made up of layers of piezoelectric ceramic and with alternating-side- contacted inner electrodes and undulating outer electrodes;

Please replace paragraph [0013] with the following amended paragraph:

[0013] Fig. 2 ~~[[,]]~~ **is** a detail of the inner electrodes with rounded corners;

Please replace paragraph [0016] with the following amended paragraph:

[0016] ~~Description of the Exemplary Embodiments~~

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Page 4, please add the following new paragraph after paragraph [0021]:

[0022] The foregoing relates to a preferred exemplary embodiment of the invention, it being understood that other variants and embodiments thereof are possible within the spirit and scope of the invention, the latter being defined by the appended claims.